1: Gusinde
101, 102, 131

SH6 Yahgan SH6

[End Map II, pages 1466-1471, has been divided into sections as indicated below.]

A 1466	B 1467	C 1468
D 1469	E 1470	F 1471

/365/

Part 2

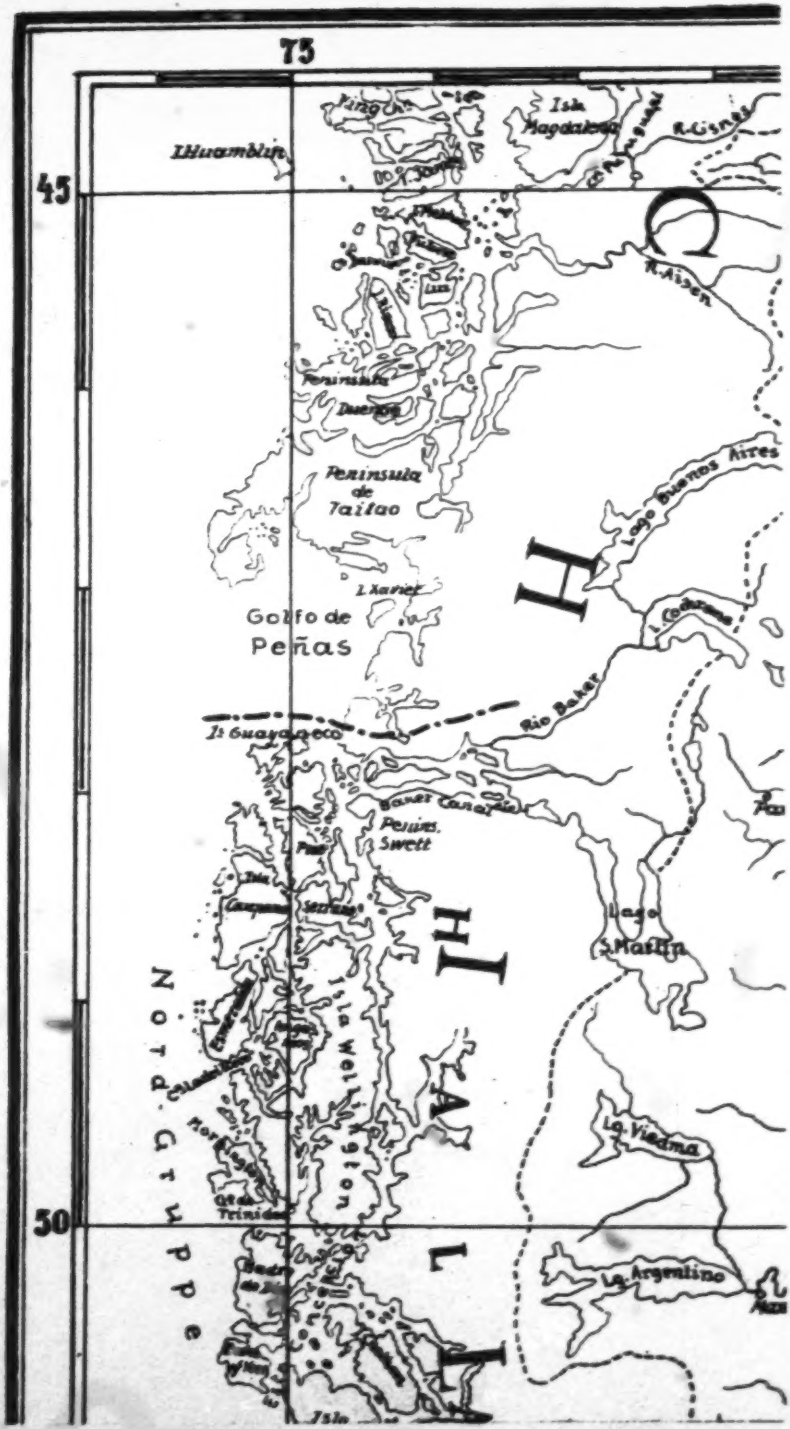
Economic Life

131 The home of the Yamana /Yahgan/ is that vast maze of islands extending farthest into Antarctic waters like irregular fragments of land broken off from the solid bulk of the South American continent. It is
132 swept by raging storms. Foam-crested waves beat against its naked shores. The restless brine eats into its rocks. Heavy showers and dense snowstorms seldom permit the golden light of the sun to break through, and the entire landscape is wrapped in a weird gloom. The temperature of the air is kept low by the cold ocean current from the south. The large expanse of water favors abundant rainfall, and a disagreeable dampness soaks everything. Heavy frosts and extreme drops in temperature are, to be sure, almost entirely absent because of the moderating ocean, but the moisture-laden air and the dripping dampness everywhere have a more unfavorable effect on plants, land animals, and human beings than cold would have (p. 21 /untranslated/). Only a few hardy specimens of flora (p. 26 /untranslated/) and fauna (p. 33 /untranslated/) can flourish. For the human beings destined to live in this cheerless region, narrow limits have been set for their demands on life and for the development of material possessions.

181 Actually, the Yamana have not merely adapted themselves to the natural conditions of their homeland to the extent they were forced to do so; mastering their environment, they have created for themselves a dignified human existence of the most modest kind. Specifically, they have arranged their affairs so advantageously that, under the given conditions, another primitive people could scarcely improve anything essential. Creative intelligence and long experience have taught them to make their very meager external resources serve them. Their extremely limited material possessions relieve them of all cares with regard to daily necessities and permit them to enjoy life. Almost everything the Yamana calls his own is very functional. In his various arrangements he is far from having achieved the perfection and artistic accomplishments manifested by the peoples on the opposite side of the globe in the Arctic regions. The things that inhibit and impede him are almost completely beyond his influence.

1:Gusinde--1466 E-5 (1918-1924) 1937 SH6 Yahgan SH6

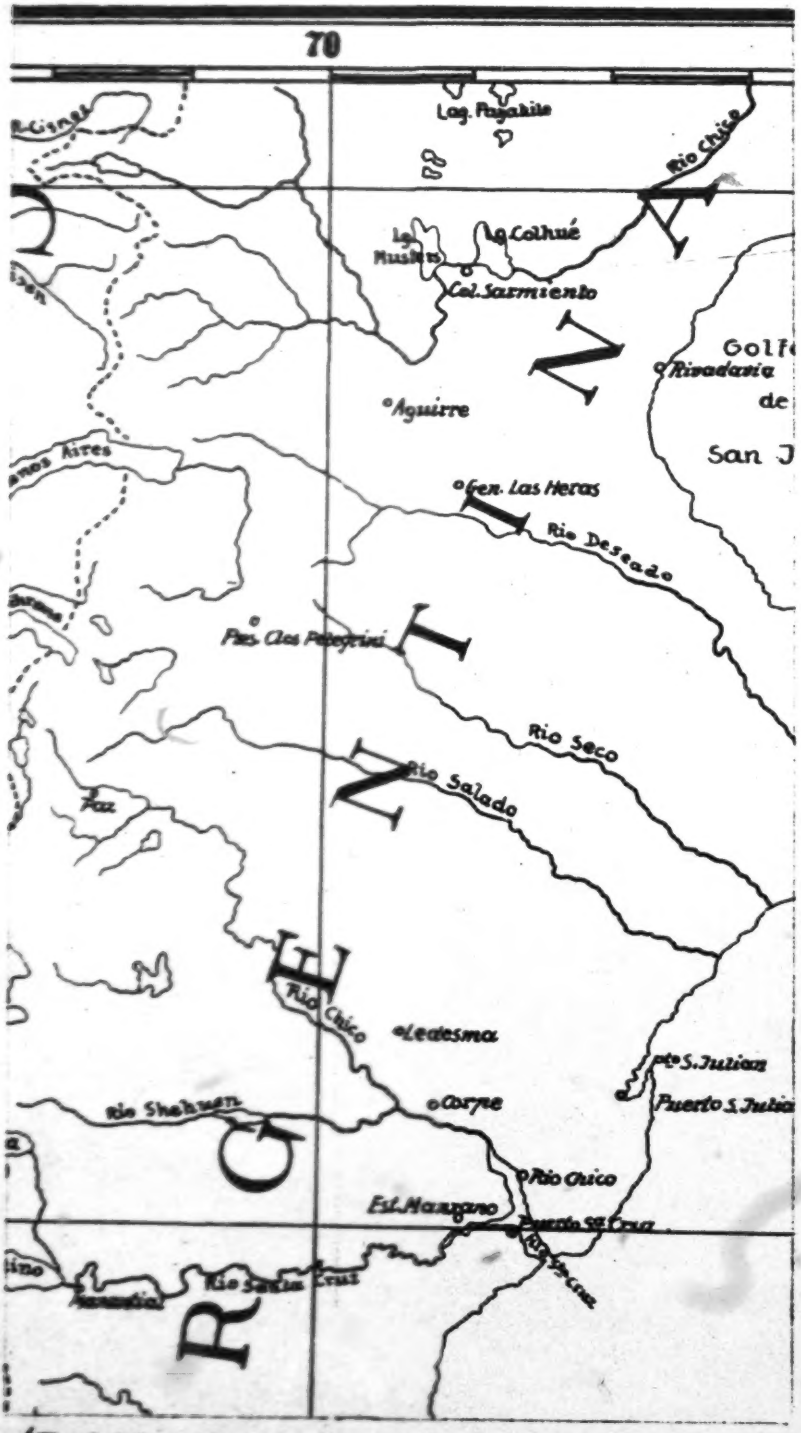
101
102
131



/End Map II, Section A/

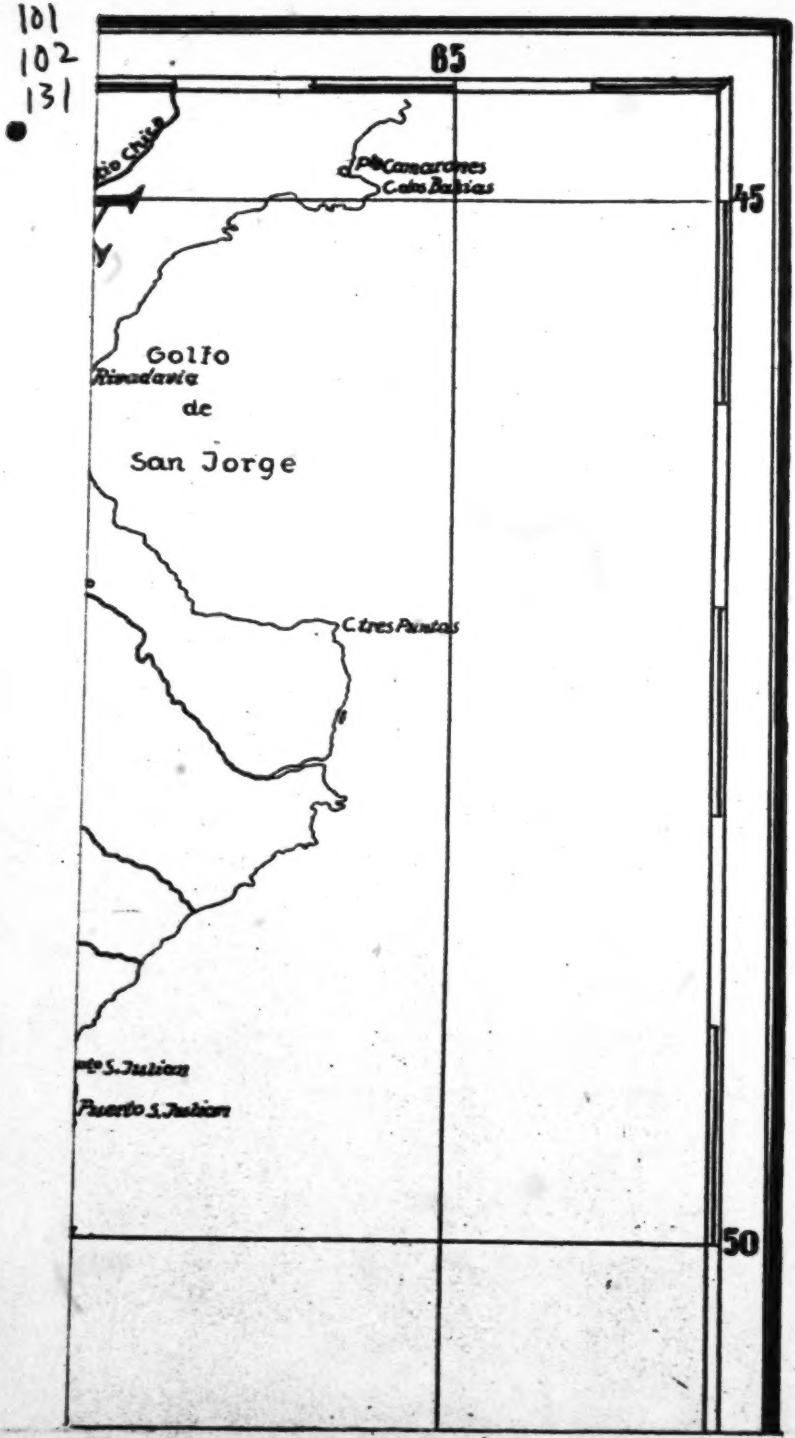
1:Gusinde--1467 E-5 (1918-1924) 1937 SH6 Yahgan SH6

101
102
131



/End Map II, Section B/

101
102
131



/End Map II, Section C/

1:Gusinde--1469 E-5 (1918-1924) 1937 SH6 Yahgan SH6

101
102
131

Geographic Distribution of the Indians of Tierra del Guego.

Based on the researches of M. Gusinde and on the official maps of the German Imperial Ministry of the Navy, prepared by K. Streit.

73

/End Map II, Section D/

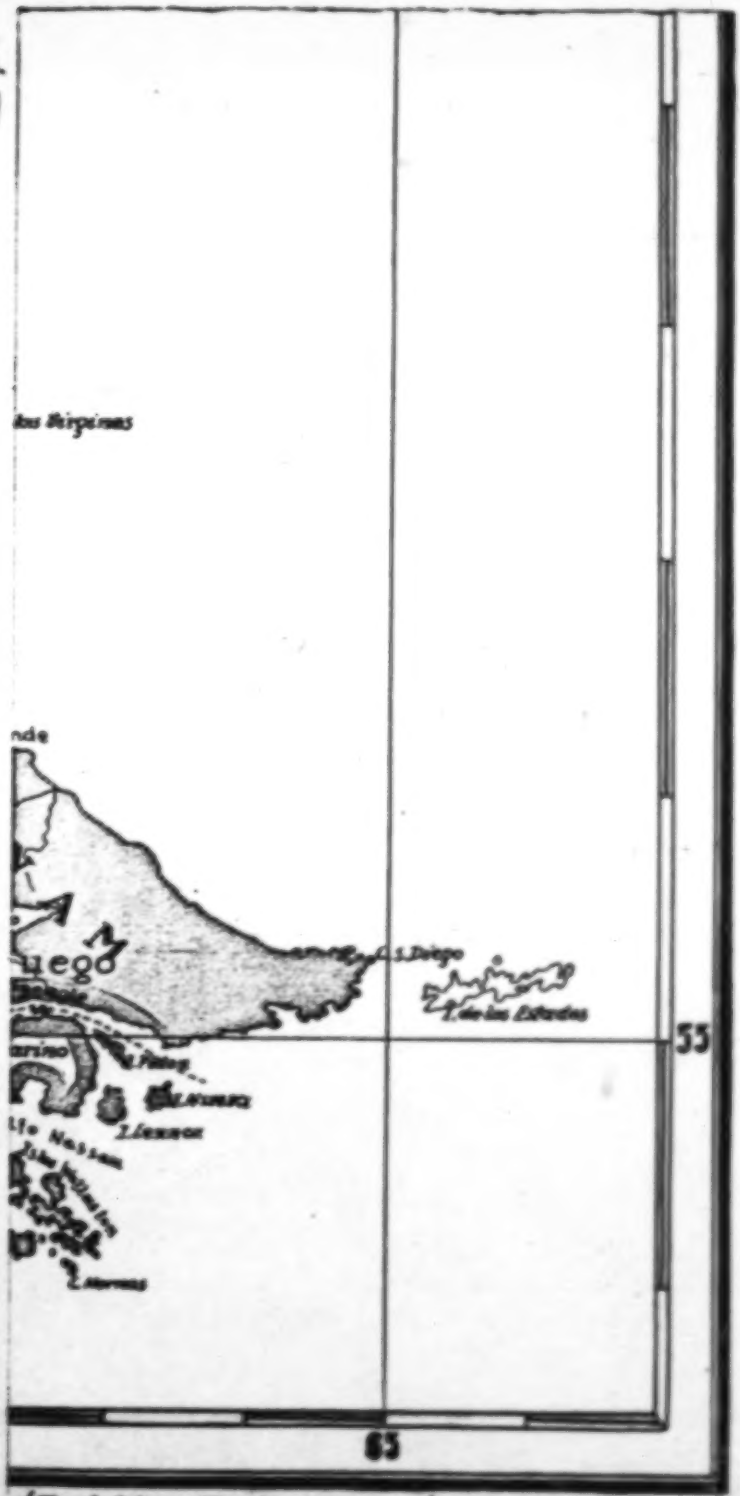
1;Gusinde--1470 E-5 (1918-1924) 1937 SH6 Yahgan SH6

101
102
131

/End Map II, Section E/

1:Gusinde--1471 E-5 (1918-1924) 1937 SH6 Yahgan SH6

101
102
131



/End Map II, Section F/

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

THE YAHGAN

By John M. Cooper

INTRODUCTION

133 **Natural environment.**—The *Yahgan* habitat is archipelagic, the mountainous islands constituting the last outposts of the Andean chain before it dips beneath the sea at Cape Horn (map 1, *No. 1A*; 132 map 2).[1] Atmospheric temperatures at sea level differ somewhat from locality to locality, with a summer mean around 50° F., a winter mean close to the freezing point, and a winter minimum around 10° F. Snowfalls not infrequently occur even in the summer months (pl. 38). Relatively very cold or very warm spells are usually of short duration. Sudden changes in temperature, in wind velocity, and in sunshine, cloudiness, and precipitation are characteristic. Violent squalls and strong gales are common.

135 The islands up to about 1,500 feet altitude are heavily wooded, chiefly with beeches (*Nothofagus betuloides* and *N. pumilio*, evergreens; *N. antarctica*, deciduous), together with Winter's bark (*Drimys winteri*), "cypress" (*Libocedrus tetragona*), and leña dura (*Maytenus magellanica*). The forest floor is thickly covered with rotting and rotten fallen trunks, which with the thick spiny masses of barberry bushes (*Berberis ilicifolia* and *B. buxifolia*) and holly (*Pernettya mucronata*) make travel through the woods extremely 136 slow and difficult. Foxes and rats, the land mammals that could have helped in the *Yahgan* dietary, were eschewed. Marine mam- 84 mals, fish, and other sea food were abundant in most localities. As 134 a result of the foregoing conditions, the *Yahgan* lived mostly on the water and along the shore line, penetrating inland very little.

131 **Territory.**—In the last century and probably from much earlier times the *Yahgan* regularly occupied the southern coast of Tierra del Fuego Island from about the eastern end of Beagle Channel to Brecknock Peninsula, and the islands south of this line to Cape Horn. But they evidently wandered more widely; *Yahgan* house sites and implements have been found as far north as Elizabeth Island in the Strait of Magellan (Bird, 1938, p. 260). Between Good Success Bay and the eastern end of Beagle Channel, there was considerable

[1] [THESE VOLS. HAVE NOT BEEN PUBLISHED; SEE SOURCE FOR CURRENT CATALOG NO. AND MAPS, FOR SIMILAR INFORMATION.—GMA 1/57]

131 contact, barter, and intermarriage with the *Ona;* between Brecknock Peninsula and the western end of Beagle Channel, with the *Alacaluf*.

101 **Names and divisions.**—The *Yahgan* called themselves *Yámana*, "human beings." They were first called *Yahgan* by the Rev. Thomas Bridges, from Yahga, the native name for the Murray Narrows region, a locality much frequented by some of them. *Yámana* would be preferable for anthropological use, but *Yahgan* is so well established in the literature that we are retaining it in the Handbook. The *Yahgan* recognized five subdivisions, each with its own aboriginal name: a southern, an eastern, a central, a western, and a southwestern (Koppers, 1927, p. 468; 1928 a, pp. 158–159; Gusinde, 1937, pp. 199–208; Lothrop, 1928, p. 120, map opp. p. 94). These subdivisions differed more dialectically than culturally.

114 **History of investigation.**—The *Yahgan* were first visited and described by Jacques L'Hermite in 1624. The next important landmark was the *Beagle* expeditions under Admiral Robert Fitz-Roy in 1829–32. It is, however, to the Rev. Thomas Bridges that we are indebted for our first intimate insight into *Yahgan* culture and linguistics. The Italo-Argentinian expedition in 1882 and the French Cape Horn expedition in 1882–83 made important advances in *Yahgan* somatology but were largely indebted to Bridges for their cultural and linguistic data. The field studies of Fathers Martin Gusinde in 1919–23 and Wilhelm Koppers in 1922 served to complete the picture, particularly as regards social and magico-religious life. Samuel K. Lothrop's field study of 1924–25 (1928, 1932 a) rounded out our knowledge of *Yahgan* technology. The only remaining gap is that of archeology, a gap in part filled by Vignati and by Lothrop, and more recently by Junius Bird in 1932–37.

The more valuable first-hand sources on the *Yahgan* from 1624 to 1917 are: Bove (1882, 1883: the two identical on culture); T. Bridges (1866, 1886, 1892, 1893); Dabbene (1911); Despard (1863); C. W. Furlong (1909, 1917 a); Hyades (1885); Hyades and Deniker (1891: of basic importance); Lovisato (1883, 1885); South American Missionary Magazine (1854–); Spegazzini (1882). The anthropological information given in these and the other sources up to 1917 is analyzed and made available in Cooper (1917). Since 1917, the most important contributions are: Lothrop (1928), for technology; Koppers (1924) and especially Gusinde (1937), for all phases of culture, particularly the social and religious ones; Von Hornbostel (1926), for music; T. Bridges (1933), for language and general culture; Vignati (1927) and Bird (1938), for archeology; Gusinde (1939), for physical anthropology.

Gusinde's exhaustive monograph, "Die Yamana" (1937), based mostly on his and Koppers' field studies and in part on a thorough combing of the literature, gives nearly all that is known of *Yahgan*

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

for savagery and ferocity, which their uncouth appearance and hardiness no little augmented. Indeed even today Tierra del Fuego is regarded by many of the world's inhabitants as a strange and romantic land, peopled by unmitigated cannibals, inhospitable, forlorn, and barren. The very distance of Tierra del Fuego from the places where most of us live is a gap not easily overleaped by the mind, and indeed this gap is not only geographical, but racial and cultural as well.

The very fundamentals of Europe, racially and culturally, have for the greater part come directly from the Asiatic continent, so that historians in a philosophic vein have assumed that the march of civilization is constantly westward. *Ex oriente lux.* However, the current anthropological viewpoint is that man developed his peculiar physical and his primitive cultural attributes within the continent of Asia, and, thus primed with hitherto unknown powers to survive and to perpetuate the species, expanded in all directions with great rapidity. This expansion we may liken to the ripples spreading from a stone dropped into a pond, and of such ethnocultural waves the first settlers of Europe and the Fuegians mark the marginal extremes in opposite directions. In other words, until the application of the compass made the oceans a highway instead of a barrier, the western Europeans and the Fuegians were the most widely separated peoples in the world.

[2] To students of human culture the Indians of Tierra del Fuego prove of unusual interest because with such tribes as the Tasmanians they are reputed among the world's most primitive inhabitants. Such isolated and backward peoples may exhibit, through cultural stagnation or degeneration, an early stage in the development of our own and of other complex civilizations. Moreover, the natives of Fuegia afford a clue as to the state of the first men to attain the shores of the Western Hemisphere.

GEOGRAPHY

[3] The term *Tierra del Fuego* is loosely applied to the large archipelago lying south of the mainland of South America; more strictly the name is assigned to the main island, shaped like an irregular triangle. It measures about 240 miles along the south coast, the base of the triangle, and 170 miles from north to south.

South of the main island, separated from it by the narrow waters of Beagle channel, are three large islands (Gordon, Hoste, Navarin).

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
5315 Yahgan 5316

and a host of smaller ones (Gable, Picton, Lennox, New, etc.). [3]
Still farther south lie the Wollaston islands. Of these the southernmost is Hoste island, terminating in the well-known Cape Horn. This isolated, sea-girt landmark faces the unquiet waters of the Antarctic ocean about seventy miles off the south shores of Tierra del Fuego.

Westward from the main island of Tierra del Fuego, across the Straits of Magellan, is the Brunswick peninsula, whose ultimate tip, Cape Froward, boldly marks the end of continental South America. Nearby are Dawson island, Clarence island, Santa Inés island, and others too numerous to mention.

The main island of Tierra del Fuego presents two types of [33]
topography: plains and mountains. The northern and eastern parts are a rolling plain, bare except for grass and small bushes, hummocked by glacial ice, of the same Tertiary formation as the Patagonian plains (pl. 1). In the northwest the land rises abruptly and Mesozoic rocks appear as in the Pre-Cordillera range in South America. The western and southern coasts are almost completely isolated from the rest of the island by Admiralty sound, an arm of the sea, and Lake Fagnano, a freshwater lake lying in the same axis. Between these two submerged valleys and the Antarctic ocean pass the Andes, which, after running north and south through the continent, here bend eastward to disappear beneath the waters of the South Atlantic. Their peaks in Tierra del Fuego reach an average height of 3500 feet, but numerous passes exist at about the 2000-foot level, where snow-pockets linger even in summer (pl. 11). Glaciers nourished by beds of eternal snow creep to the sea on the west and south.

The Magellanic archipelago then falls in three geographic [3]
entities, and each of these was occupied not long ago by corresponding kinds of Indians, speaking unrelated tongues. These divisions are: (1) Tierra del Fuego, occupied by the *Ona* and *Haush*; (2) the southern islands and the south shore of Tierra del Fuego (pl. 111), peopled by the *Yahgan*; and (3) the western islands, where lived the *Alacaluf*. The Yahgan and Alacaluf were separated by Brecknock peninsula, a barren headland, sea-girt, with no protecting island fringe, and therefore exposed to the full fury of storms sweeping across the Pacific ocean.

[p. 24-A]